CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The living dialect of Selston parish is the subject of this survey. The speech of this area seemed so unusual to me as to deserve particular attention. The unusual qualities of the dialect came to my notice because I have lived in Nuthall, three miles from the Erewash, for the greater part of my life, and have had many opportunities to listen to the local talk of Selston, of neighbouring villages, and of Nottingham, the nearest large town. My acquaintance with the Selston dialect was established early, as my grandparents lived in the parish and I spent some time there as a young child. Since then I have often listened with interest to the speech of Selstonians, while visiting an uncle in the same parish, who was able to introduce me to many of the informants on whose speech this survey is based.

Selston, a large, rambling parish, is situated in the extreme west of mid-Nottinghamshire, about nine miles north-west of Nottingham, about twelve miles north-east of Derby, and seven miles south-west of Mansfield. The parish is bordered on the west side by the River Erewash which divides Nottinghamshire from Derbyshire at this point. A mile and a half from the parish, to the south, is Eastwood, the birthplace of D.H. Lawrence, and three

miles to the east is Newstead Abbey where Byron lived. The extensive parish consists of the communities of Selston, which occupies one of the highest points in the area, at over 500 feet above sea level, Bagthorpe, Underwood, Westwood, Jacksdale, and the smaller areas of Dove Green, Allen's Green, Barrow Green, Alma and Inkerman.

Selston lies in part of the great coalfield stretching out into Derbyshire and Yorkshire. Coal measures form a strip reaching from Stapleford to Teversal, and including the parishes or parts of parishes of Trowell, Wollaton, Bilborough, Strelley, Cossal, Awsworth, Watnall, Eastwood, Greasley, Brinsley, Selston, Kirkby, and Huthwaite with various other villages. Although Selston has been a mining parish for over five hundred years it retains much of its rural character. Across the river to the west is the pleasant scenery of Golden Valley, backed by the hills of Derbyshire. To the east and south east is the picturesque countryside of the Misk Hills, Beauvale, and Moorgreen, which Lawrence describes in <u>The White Peacock</u>. Newstead and Annesley, to the east and north-east, still contain parts of the old Sherwood Forest which must have covered Selston centuries ago, as the names of Westwood and Underwood in the parish suggest. Miners need walk no more than a mile from Underwood to see Robin Hood's Well, near to the ruins of a once fine Carthusian priory, and to see deer roaming freely in the woods. The ruins of two medieval castles stand at Codnor and Greasley, not far from the parish.

The name Selston is found in the Domesday Book as "Selestun" derived from two words, the Saxon "Selui" or Danish "Selir", being the name of a settler, and "tun" meaning a settlement of the family.[1] Originally, there were three settlements in the area, one around Selston Church, one at Wansley Hall, and the other at Westwood Hall. Later on other settlements were made in the area and were no doubt named after the people who lived there. For example, there is Bagthorpe (Bagga's Thorpe), Wansley (Wanda's Ley), Dove Green, Alan's Green and Jacksdale.

In the middle ages, farming was the chief occupation in Selston, the agriculture being carried out on the open-field pattern, with large areas still undeveloped. The long narrow fields on the clayey soils of Bagthorpe Bottom are a relic of the strip-pattern of farming. Large areas of the parish are covered with sandy soils and until the Enclosure Act of 1877 these remained common lands, often visited by gypsies. In the latter part of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century the Enclosure Acts were passed requiring anyone who owned land, or claimed it, to fence it in, but little was done in Selston to fence land off until 1865. When in 1877

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1. This etymology and some of the details of industry and education which follow, are taken from the Selston Church of England (Controlled) School 1861-1961 Centenary Booklet, Langley Mill, 1961.

fences and stakes were erected round common land, there was much unrest in Selston, resulting in the destruction of miles of fencing and subsequent prosecutions.

Some of the following details on coal mining are taken from Victorian Selston, a book published on behalf of the Selston Branch of the Workers' Education Association. Some additional points are taken from a publication entitled Selston Church of England (Controlled) School 1861-1961 Centenary Booklet.

"This parish lies entirely on the exposed coal-field, with the outcrop coals being of the Middle Coal measures. No less than sixteen seams outcrop at the surface within the boundaries of the parish and although the seams generally dip to the east, they follow an undulating pattern on the west side and are deeper on the east side. In fact, no coal seams outcrop in the adjoining parish of Kirkby-in-Ashfield."[1] As a result of the coal outcrop and shallow seams, coal mining in the parish started at a very early date. In 1306 a coal lease for 99 years was taken out in return for 32 horse loads of coal every year. Most of the coal in these early years was worked by the Prior and monks of Beauvale Priory, the ruins of which still remain. The Prior of Beauvale had, in 1457, taken a ninety-nine year lease of all the coal and the right of digging for it in Selston parish, and all the wood growing

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1. Victorian Selston, Selston, 1975, p. 10.

there to make props and other equipment, paying 13/4d yearly as long as they might obtain coal. The lease was confirmed by the vicar of Selston, John Day, in 1462. The coal was first worked from outcrop by means of drifts, but in 1457 the shallow seams were worked from shafts. Twenty years of the term were unexpired at the dissolution, when a former prior of Beauvale was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn. For the endowment of this priory in the reign of Edward III, Nicholas da Canteloupe gave great possessions in the villages of Selston, Greasley, Watnall, Kimberley and Newthorpe, and gave also the natives or villeins of Selston and their services. Further leases and records from the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries indicate the continuation of coal mining in the area. In 1483 a bond was made between Elisha Dey of Watnowe Cauntcliff, Notts., husbandman, and Richard Oty of Nottingham, draper, for the delivery of ten wain loads of coal from Selston pit. In 1535 Beauvale monks received £20 per year from sea-coal profits, the coal being sent to Newark. In 1574 a lease was taken for 21 years by Charles Morrison of coal mines at Selston. In 1620 coal was sold at sixteen pence per hundredweight in Nottingham or exchanged for grain grown on the rich farmlands of the Trent valley.

"These early workings were in the form of 'Bell-pits' so named because of the shape of the shallow diggings which opened out at the bottom in the shape of a bell when the coal was reached. As much coal as possible was

extracted around the base of the pit which was then abandoned before the sides caved in, or the pit filled with water. Sites of these workings were on the Felley side of Underwood Common, the north side of Wansley Hall and perhaps on either side of Bagthorpe Brook.

Around the middle period of Selston mining (early 1700's) the shallow seams had been exhausted and in place of Bell-pits, 'Addits' and shallow shafts were used. An addit is a sloping tunnel driven down until the coal is reached. Sometimes another road or tunnel was driven out from the coal seams, which, if the surface contours were favourable, served as an outlet for water and assisted with the ventilation of the workings. Vertical shafts, probably square shaped and timber lined, were the next development. These shafts were sunk to reach the coal at between 80 and 100 feet deep. Access to the workings from these shafts would be by underground roadways, their height being that of the coal seam (2'6" to 4'0") and three feet wide. The life of such a pit would be governed by the ability of the miners to maintain the shafts and roadways, deal with water and ventilation problems, and the availability of coal."[1]

"During this period, the joint Lords of the Manor were involved with the coal winnings as shown by an estate return of Sir Robert Sutton dated 1721 showing 22,924 loads of coal with a profit value of £1,133-19s.-0d

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1. Ibid., p. 10.

between the years 1710-21 and mined off the Selston section only.

In 1728 the Barber and Walker Company obtained a lease to mine coal for 99 years from Sir Robert and these pits were probably at either Underwood or Bagthorpe. Later in 1739, Sir Robert Sutton and Sir Wolston Dixie jointly worked pits at the rear of Selston Hall."[1]

As the industry developed, so the mines became more numerous and the workings deeper: "The early 19th. Century and the Victorian era witnessed developments of coal mining, which included coal being extracted from depths of 270-550 feet in the first part of the century and from 1,000 feet or more later in the century.

The Companies working the coal at this time included:- The Barber and Walker Company at Underwood; Fenton and Leather at Bagthorpe; James Oakes and Company at Jacksdale; and the Butterley Company at Portland and Mexborough.

The Portland shafts worked by the Butterley Company, although lying in the parish of Kirkby-in-Ashfield have always been considered to be 'Selston Pits'. These pits, so named because the land was leased from the Duke of Portland by the Butterley Company, had a reasonably long productive life. Portland No. 1 pit was in existence in 1820, whilst No. 7 pit, which was sunk at about the time Queen Victoria came to the throne, was finally closed along with No. 2 shaft about 1916. In its early days

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1. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

Portland No. 1 was considered to be the largest colliery in Nottinghamshire. The Mexborough Pits which had three shafts, were sunk on the west side of Portland Road and were well within the Selston boundary. The No. 3 or 'Lower Pit' had the interesting name of 'Bog and Wink'. These pits were sunk about 1856 and abandoned in 1894."[1] From the 'Bog and Wink' colliery, coal was transported up Bentley's Hill by means of an old-fashioned locomotive, known to the local inhabitants as the 'Coffee Pot'. From Bentley's Hill the coal was run downhill by rail to the canal for transportation by barge along the Erewash Canal to Nottingham.

"Other collieries worthy of mention are Underwood (Selston) sunk in 1879, which was a development by the Barber and Walker Company of an earlier pit known to exist in 1836; the Pye Hill colliery which was sunk in 1875 was a development of earlier shafts in the Jacksdale Valley, whilst the last Selston pit, 'Bull and Butcher', was sunk in 1893. More commonly called New Selston it was closed in 1956.

One of the last leases of the Victorian period was signed in March 1893 between Earl Cowper and Lord Mexborough and the James Oakes Company and was for the extraction of four seams of coal for a period of thirty years. The Selston (Underwood) and Pye Hill pits are still being worked."[2]

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1. Ibid., p. 11.
2. Ibid., p. 11.

Mining has always been hard and dangerous work and old records illustrate the arduous and even brutal conditions which had to be endured by nineteenth century colliers. The following extracts are from the Sub-Commissioners Report of 1844 on food, clothing and physical conditions of children and young persons employed in coal mines:

"Their food: "Generally speaking is as fine and ample as those labouring above ground". John Bonser who gave evidence was 10 years old and worked at Portland No. 5 from six in the morning to nine at night with one hour for dinner for one shilling per day. His evidence was that he "breakfasts before he goes on dry bread and tea, his dinner is sent consisting of bread, meat, potatoes and sometimes pudding. Has bread, bacon and tea when he goes home".

Their health: Dr. Blake considers:- "They are generally as healthy as the labourers above ground" which he attributes to their better diet. Other evidence suggested that a collier child would sooner get the better of an illness, than, say, a stocking maker, as he had the better stamina.

Their clothing: 'Usually consists of a coarse flannel shirt or jacket and trousers of the same material'.

Their conditions of work: 'Creswells Pit' Bagthorpe. Roadway height 3'2". Said of one nine year old boy, John Houghton, "This boy had lost so much blood owing to striking his head against the roof, that he appeared quite bewildered". The Portland pits employed 29 boys under 13 years of age, the youngest being 7 years old, and 27 under 18.

"Levi Bradby is 10 years old and has worked 2 years for one shilling a day. Is sometimes beaten by the Corporal with the ass-stick and is pretty well marked. Goes to Sunday School for 14 weeks. Has been at various schools but never stopped long at any. Is in easy lessons but has not any notion of spelling. Does not like working in the pits being so ill-used by the Corporals ..."

"Joseph Abbot, a boy, was killed and the ass also, by a pothole (roof) falling. Thomas Spinks, engine man at No. 2 pit does not know how many children are employed, but thinks the youngest must be near eight years of age ..." "[1]

The houses built for the miners in the nineteenth century were mostly terraced, the largest unbroken terrace being Portland Row, demolished in 1966, which boasted an unbroken terrace of 47 houses without a single "jennel" for access to the rear of the buildings. The 1844 Commissioner's Report commented: "'Those cottages I visited varied much in different parts of the district, some neat and comfortable, moreso than any of their neighbours who were engaged either lace-making, stocking-making or agriculture. I observed in all parts, if there was but little furniture, every collier's cottage had a blazing fire, this they got free of any expense'."[2]

Coal mining has long been the chief, though not the sole, occupation of Selston, as the name Ironville, a

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1. Ibid., p. 12.
2. Ibid., p. 12.

community to the west of Pye Hill and Jacksdale, suggests. The mining of iron ore was an important industry in Victorian Selston. "Ironstone which was found in close proximity to the coal, was mined at Bagthorpe and on the Erewash side of Selston Hall. Iron furnaces existed near the River Erewash (on the north side), in the Toad-Hole area (to the west) and near the site of the ironworks later to be developed near the present Pye Hill colliery site."[1] Brick-making took place in the brickyard behind Portland Row, at Underwood, and on the western side of the parish. Oil was found near Pye Bridge, and for a time a candle factory stood near to the present Pye Bridge station. Framework knitting was another industry in the parish. The first available evidence of this is found in the parish register in 1755 when it was given as the occupation of William Townsend. The machines or frames on which hose were made were worked by people of the village and they were under contract to a Nottingham firm. In 1841 there were 191 frames working in Selston Green. Other frames were worked at Sleepy Hole and the 'Bull and Butcher'. The price paid in wages for the knitting was fourpence per dozen for plain hose and sixpence per dozen for long hose. The last of these frames to be worked was at a thatched cottage near the 'Shepherd's Rest' Inn at Bagthorpe in 1888. In the same decade, as Lawrence mentions in Sons and Lovers,[2] the women of the "Bottoms",

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1. Ibid., p. 10.
2. D.H. Lawrence, Sons and Lovers, Harmondsworth, 1966, pp. 40, 41.

two miles south of Bagthorpe, seam hose for 2.1/2d a dozen pairs, which are collected by a man in an old-fashioned trap.

Selston's mining industry has partly been responsible for the great increase in the parish's population since the Industrial Revolution. It has increased from 833 in the year 1801 to 9,691 in 1951. There has probably been a further increase since 1951. The following figures indicate the growth in the importance and the prosperity of the parish:

Year	1801	1821	1841	1861	1881	1901	1921	1951
Population	833	1321	1982	2628	4273	7071	9285	9691

Early Education in Selston

The first school in Selston was a Dame School, near the "Top of the Town". This school continued for some time after the opening of the National School in 1861, and there are references to scholars moving from one to the other.

The children attending school in 1866 came from a very widely scattered area including Kirkby, Westwood, Jacksdale, Portland Row and Underwood. An analysis of the children in 1866 shows that there were 219 children attending between the ages of four years and sixteen years. It may be surprising that there was one boy of sixteen years of age and one of fifteen years of age attending

school. Probably these two stayed on to become monitors or candidates for teaching. Besides these there were others who took advantage of school lessons even after starting work. One of these attended six hours per week, or more, as work permitted, and another, the father of one of my informants, attended school when he had no employ at the pit.

From the beginning of the school right up to 1891 parents had to pay weekly for their children's schooling. This, known as "school pence" or "schoolwage", was generally threepence per week per child. The fees of the children of poor families were paid by the Relieving Officer or the Managers.

Children had to walk very long distances to school. In 1865 a note in the school register says, "The weather affects the school very much. When fine the school is full - when wet the scholars invariably stay at home". The education they received in those days followed a very strict pattern with little more than reading, writing, and arithmetic being taught to children sitting in long rows of seats, with an intense silence in the classroom while they wrote on their slates or read their books. Physical Education was known as drill and was only possible on fine dry days. The records show that increasing numbers of children were admitted to the school and passed their examinations. Many became teachers, while others took what was known then as the Master Collier's Certificate.

During the local coal strikes of 1893 and 1921 and the General Strike of 1926, many children absented themselves from school to pick coal from the pit hills. In 1923 new regulations required that children should attend school until the age of fourteen years and this remained so until the Second World War when the leaving age was raised to fifteen years.

Today there are many schools in Selston parish. On the whole, Selston has been a community with a respect for education, and has produced many teachers, particularly among its women. In the old days, to give a person a good start on a teaching career, sacrifices sometimes had to be made by the rest of his family. In the case of the first headmaster of Selston parish (my great grandfather's brother), his brothers had to go down the pit to pay for his education. To become a teacher was often the only way to achieve any degree of social mobility.

This brief summary has been included in order to illustrate the geographical, historical, industrial and educational context in which the dialect evolved. It now remains to examine certain aspects of the social background which have influenced the evolution of the dialect.

Social Background

Selston is not isolated, and I was unable to find informants who had never been outside the village. Nowadays the villagers have easy access to transport, although this has not always been the case. Years ago, Selston people rarely travelled far afield, except on foot, but many of the footpaths have disappeared with the advent of motor transport, as a retired miner explained:

[louk əʔ ðɪ 'bɒɪwi:z | lɛuk ətʔ ðɪ 'fɑʔpadz 'əkrɔs
look at your by-ways; look at your footpaths across

fɛɪlz | lɛuk tə 'bɛgəlɛɪ | lɛuk œʔ mɪsk |
fields; look to Beggarlee; look over the Misk;

ða 'kanə fɒɪnd əm 'na:di:z ðɪn œ'grɔun ɔp
you can't find them nowadays, they're overgrown up

bɪ'kɔs nɔu 'bɔgə wɔəks na: || ðɪd wi:t ən 'auə fər
because no bugger walks now. They'd wait an hour for

ə bɔs tə ra:d tɪu ma:l 'sɪunər ən sɛt ɔf ən wɔ:k ɪʔ |
a bus to ride two miles sooner than set off and walk it.

wɒɪ dam ɪʔ wɛn ɑ: wɪ 'kɔ:tɪn a: 'mɪsɪs ðɪ
Why, damn it, when I was courting our missis, there

'wɪnə 'bɔsəz ðɛn | nɔʔ tɪl leɪt ɪn lɒɪf [1] |||]
weren't 'buses then; not till late in life.

In those days, holidays were scarce, according to

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1. The symbols used here and elsewhere in this study are those of the International Phonetic Alphabet.

another informant:

[ðə 'nɪvə kəd ə'fuəd 'aldɪz | ən 'ɛnɪrəud |
You never could afford holidays, and anyway,

ðə 'nɪvə gɔʔ nən frʌmʔ pɪt |||]
you never got any from the pit.

A Selstonian would enjoy an occasional outing, if he walked to the nearest station:

[ðɪ wə nəu 'transpuəʔ jə si: | 'ɛnɪwɪə ðɪ wɛntʔ
There was no transport you see. Anywhere they went

ðɪ ad tə wɔək || wɛl | wɛn a: kən fɔs rɪ'mɛmbə |
they had to walk. Well, when I can first remember,

ɪf jə 'wɔntəd tə gɔ ə:ʔ joʊ ad tə gɔ tə 'kɔdnə pɑ:k
if you wanted to go out you had to go to Codnor Park

'steɪʃn̩ | ðaʔ wə θrɛɪ mɑ:l ə'weɪ | ən ɪʔ wə wɔn
station, that was three miles away, and it was one

ən ə 'pɛnɪ tə 'nɔtɪŋəm ðɛn | rɪ'tɛən | ən joʊ kəd
and a penny to Nottingham then - return - and you could

gɔ təʔ 'fɔʔbɔ: matʃ | joʊ kəd gɔ təʔ
go to the football match; you could go to the

'wɔʃɪntən ən ɛɪ ə rɛɪtʔ slap ɔp 'dɪnə | ən gɔ təʔ
Washington and have a right slap up dinner; and go to the

'ɛmpaɪə ɔ·ʔ 'ɪpədrɔum | ən wɛn jəd dɔn
Empire or the Hippodrome, and when you'd done

'jadn̥t spɛnt ɛɪf ə kræ:n ən jʌd ad ə rɪəl
you hadn't spent half a crown and you'd had a real

gɔd di: |||]
good day

However, a trip to Nottingham was the exception rather than the rule, and there was seldom need to travel far. An exclamation of surprise still heard in Selston and Brinsley is "I'll go to Pinxton!" Perhaps this saying suggests that Pinxton, now only a short 'bus ride away, was once considered a good deal further.

Villagers sometimes encountered difficulty in adjusting themselves to anonymity in the town after leaving the neighbourly atmosphere of the village. One Selstonian told me how a lady he had known went to Nottingham and lost her daughter Kate. After searching in vain, she approached a stranger and said: [ɛɪ ɔp 'sɛrɪ |
Hey up, sirrah!

as tə sɛɪd a: kɛɪt]. This lady was accustomed to
have you seen our Kate?
a community in which everyone knew each other. On the days when the wakes were held:

[ðə kəd ə kɔm ɪn ðɪs 'vɪlɪdʒ | ən ðə kəd ə
You could have come in this village, and you could have

gɔr ə kɔp ə ti: ər ə 'samwɪdʒ ət 'ɛnɪ a:s ɪnʔ plɛ̝ɪs
got a cup of tea or a sandwich at any house in the place

ɪn 'ɛudən tɒɪmz | 'ɪvrɪbɔdɪ wɨ 'frɛnle | 'ɪvrɪbɔdɪ
in olden times; everybody was friendly, everybody

nɔud 'ɪvrɪbɔdɪ | ðə nɔud frʌm wɔn ɛnd ə?
knew everybody, you were known from one end of the

grɛɪn tə(t?) tɔðə | ðə nɔud ɔ: ra:nt? 'vɪlɪdʒ |||]
green to the other you were known all round the village.

It is understandable that the best speakers of the Selston dialect, that is, those least influenced by RP, are the old inhabitants who, growing up in a closer knit community than exists today, would have little contact with outsiders. The exemption of miners from national service, during peacetime or war, is an important factor in the conservation of the Selston dialect. Miners were able to contribute to the national effort within their home community and avoided the influence which a year or two in the army could have had on their speech.

At one time, although there were a few other occupations, a large proportion of Selston men were miners. Many of them are today, but expansion in building and communication has brought an increasing influx of new families who find work outside the parish. Consequently the dialect is changing. Moreover, the speech habits of the younger generation are influencing those of the older, and most families now own a wireless or television which brings RP into their homes. Today, many speakers of the dialect can modify their speech to a more standard form of English when speaking to a stranger, while amongst themselves they may make no conscious effort to switch codes, as it would be raising unnecessary social barriers. Many of them are aware

that their mode of speech differs from that of outsiders and is therefore interesting, and they do not seem to resent the interest it arouses.

A local example of "blason populaire" is the Selstonian's belief that the people of Brinsley, a neighbouring village, are "broader" in their speech. The more standard speakers have been heard to mock Brinsley speech by saying:

[dɑz ðaː kɑm frəm 'brɒnzlɪ | aːt əʔ 'tɪndʒən rɔː|||]
Do you come from Brinsley out of the Engine Row?

(the broadest speakers were believed to come from Engine Row). One informant told me:

[ɪf ɛut | ðɪ tɔːk 'brɔːdər əʔ 'brɒnzlɪ ðən
If anything, they talk broader at Brinsley than

wɛɪ dɪu bɪ'kɔs ðɪ seɪ 'brɒnzlɪ | ən ɪʔs 'brɪnzlɪ
we do because they say,"Brunsley", and it's Brinsley,

ɪnt ɪʔ|||]
isn't it?

Maybe this is a myth, for the informant himself used "Brunsley" several times and the irony in his statement seemed unconscious. The Bagthorpe "twang", as he called it, is by no means a mark of illiteracy, for:

[wɛɪ seɪ ɪʔ | nɒt əz wɪ ræɪd ɪʔ | ɪʔs dʒɒs ðə
We say it, not as we read it, it's just the

plęɪs əz tə lɪvz ɪn ðatʔs ɔ: |||]
place that you live in, that's all

Linguistic blason populaire exists in neighbouring areas too. An Eastwood collier spoke of the "broad" dialect of Heanor by saying

[ɪn 'ɛɪnə ðɪ sɛɪ ɛɪ dʒɛɪ pɛɪ tɛɪ waɪ fər 'i:dʒɪpt]
In Heanor they say ..... for Egypt.

In this instance too it is noticeable that he uses the local pronunciation of Heanor ['ɛɪnə] instead of ['hi:nə], the very pronunciation he is ridiculing. Additional examples of blason populaire are to be found in Chapter 7.

It is to be hoped that those who read Lady Chatterley's Lover did not form a wrong impression of this dialect. Selstonians frown upon "four letter words" as much as anyone does. One chief informant explained the way in which language was modified when the colliers came out of the pit into what often seemed to them another world - the world of daylight. The speech is transcribed from the beginning of an interview when the collier had not yet lapsed fully into his accustomed dialect.

[wën ɑ: sɪ: | wɨ lɪv tɪu kɒɪndz əv lɒɪvz || wi: mɒɪtʔ
When I say we live two kinds of lives, we might

swɛ·ə | da:n ðə mɒɪnz | wɪtʃ ɑ nɔu wɪ dɪu || ən
swear down the mines, which I know we do, and

ɑ kən tɛl jə ðɪs | i:vn̩ frəm mɒɪ 'bɔɪɵd dɛɪz əz
I can tell you this, even from my boyhood days as

ə 'gaŋlad | ɑ jɔ·s tə swɛər ɪn mɪ slɛ̈ɪp | än |
a ganglad I used to swear in my sleep, and

mɪ 'mɔðə jɔ·s tə tɛl mɪ | ən mɪ dad sɛz ɑ: |
my mother used to tell me, and my dad says "Aye",

ɛɪ sɛz ju: kən si: wɔʔ sɔ:t ə lɒɪf ɪt ɪz 'ɒndə'gra:nd |
he says, you can see what sort of life it is underground."

bʌʔ wɛn wɪər aut ɔn ðə tɔp | ɪts ə 'fɒnɪ θɪŋ |
but when we're out on the top, it's a funny thing,

wɪ kɒt ɪt aɒt əz mɒtʃ əz wɪ kan wɪ jɨuz | vɛ̈rɪ lɪtl̩
we cut it out as much as we can. We use very little

ɔv ɪtʔ ɪn 'kɒmpənɪ | əv 'ɛnɪ kɒɪnd jə mɒɪtʔ lɛt ə wæ̈əd
of it in company, of any kind. You might let a word

slɪp | naɒ ən ðɛn | sou jɒ dɨɒ rɪ^{ə}lɪ lɪv tɪu
slip now and then. So you do really live two

lɒɪvz |||]
lives.

The occasional oath seems justified in situations of stress and danger:

[ən 'ɒndə'ni:θ ðə gra:nd | bɪ'li:v mi: | ə 'mɒɪnəz
And underneath the ground, believe me, a miner

lɪvz tɨu kɒɪnd əv lɒɪvz || wɔn prạps | 'ɒndə'ni:θ |
lives two kind of lives. one perhaps, underneath,

wɪ jɪuz wæ̈^{ə}dz ðət ɑ· nɔtʔ fə 'hɛvrɪwɔn tɑ ɪə |
we use words that are not for everyone to hear.

sɑm'tɒ·ˈmz ðɨz ðɪŋz ɪn əz lɒ·ˈvz ðəʔ kɑ:lz
Sometimes there's things in our lives that calls

fər ə 'swɛəwɛ̈ə̈d | wɪtʃ ɨz kwɒ·ˈt 'kɔmən 'ɑndə'gra·ᵒnd |
for a swearword, which is quite common underground

bəʔ ɪtʔs 'nɛvə 'tɛkn̩ ɛnɪ 'nɔutɪs ɔv || sɑm mɛn 'nɛvə
but it's never taken any notice of. Some men never

swɛə da:n gra:nd | jɑ· n̩v ðaʔ tɑ·ˈp əv man | ðəʔ
swear down ground. You have that type of man, that

jɑ: wɑd 'nɛvər ɪər ə wɛ̈ᵊd frəm ɪm 'ɔunlɪ wɔ̈t ɪz |
you would never hear a word from him only what is ...

ɪz 'natʃərəl lɒɪk | deɪ ɪn ən deɪ autʔ | bʌtʔ
is natural like, day in and day out. But

'spi:kɪn fə mɪ'sɛn | ɑ:m nɒtʔ 'mɛɪʲɪn mɪ'sɛn wɔn ə
speaking for myself, I'm not making myself one of

ðɛm 'ɪnəsənt sɔ:tʔ | ɑ:v swɔ·ᵊ | 'ɑndəni:θ |
them innocent sort. I've swore, underneath,

ən 'prɒbəblɪ n̩v swɔ:r ɔntʔtɒp | bʌtʔ 'vɛrɪ
and probably I've swore on the top, but very

'vɛrɪ 'lɪtl̩ | ɑ kɒtʔ mɪ 'laŋwɪdʒ | əz mɒtʃ əz 'ɛvər
very little. I cut my language, as much as ever

ɑ kan ɔntʔ pɪtʔtɔp | ən trɒɪz tə lɪv ðə lɒɪf |
I can on the pit top, and tries to live the life,

əz 'ɛnɪ mn̩ ʃɒd lɪv | bʌtʔ da:n bɪ'lɔu | bɪ'li:v mɛɪ |
as any man should live. But down below, believe me,

ɑv bɪn əz bad əz 'ɛnɪbɔdɪ | ɑm nɔʔ 'mɛˈkɪn
I've been as bad as anybody. I'm not making

'mɑ:sɛn ə sɛɪnt | wɪtʃ ɑm ə lɔŋ weɪ frəm bɪn wɔn |
myself a saint, which I'm a long way from being one

ən ðɪz bɪn kɔ:z for ɪtʔ lɛfʔ mɪ tËl ðɪ ||| .....
and there's been cause for it let me tell you .....

ɑ:v sɛɪn θɪŋz əz əz meɪd jə swɛə || ən ɑv sɛd
I've seen things as has made you swear, and I've said

ə lɔt ə θɪŋz 'sɔmtɔ'ˈmz | θɪŋz əz jə seɪ ɔnʔ
a lot of things sometimes, things as you say on the

spər əʔ 'mɔuməntʔ | əz jə | jə 'dɔnə wantʔ tər
spur of the moment, as you ... you don't want to

'apm̩ bətʔ | ətʔ ðatʔ 'mɔuməntʔ ðə 'dɔznə keə 'wËðər
happen but, at that moment you don't care whether

ɪtʔ dɔz ə nɔtʔ ||| jə seɪm əz ə 'sɔuldʒə | ə
it does or not. You're same as a soldier, a

'sɔuldʒər ɪn ðə 'trɛntʃəz ən ɑm gɔɪn bą̈ na: tə ðə
soldier in the trenches and I'm going back now to the

fä:s wä:l wɔ: | jə wɛnt ɔn ɔn'dɔ:ntəd || 'kɔmreɪdz
first world war. You went on undaunted. Comrades

wəd fɔ:l əʔ sɒɪd əv jə | 'i:ðə rɒɪt and
would fall at the side of you, Either right hand

ɔ: lɛf(t) | ən ɪts bɪn seɪm ɪn ðə mɒɪnz | ɑ·ˈv
or left, and it's been same in the mines. I've

si:n mɛn wɪ'ðɪn ə hɛɪs | əv bi'ɪn kɪld | wɛ̈n ə
seen men within an ace of being killed, when a

stəun | wɛ̈n jəv bɪn wɔʔ wi: kɔ:d 'drɔ:ɪn ɔf |
stone - when you've been what we called drawing off,

ðatʔs 'drɔ:ɪntʃʔtɪmbə æ:t ətʔ bak gɔbz əz ðɨ
that's drawing the timber out of the back gobs as they

kɔ:d əm ||| ... ɑv si:n mɛn 'wɛ̈:kɪn | ɑv si:n
called them ... I've seen men working; I've seen

ə stəun drɔp ətʔ spɪd ɔn əm | ðət əd ə
a stone drop at the side of them that would have

kɪld jə əz dɛd əz ə stəun | had ɪt əv ɪtʃʔ jə |
killed you as dead as a stone, had it have hit you.

bʌtʔ | 'fɔ:tʃənətʔlɪ | ðɪv jɔs mɪst | ən əz
But, fortunately, they've just missed, and as

ðɪv mɪst | jə gɔ' ɔn | jə jɔs sɨ | gɔd
they've missed, you go on. You just say "God,

fraŋk ðatʔ wɪ ə nɪərən |||]
Frank, that was a near one

I was amused by another collier's explanation of the fact that they do sometimes swear amongst themselves. He explained that, working down the pit, they are so near to the infernal regions that they have to swear in order to humour the devil. This is typical of the Selstonian sense of humour. The colliers like to lampoon anything pretentious or "high falutin'" including the "golf-ballish" speech of

the genteel, as they have been known to call it. Most of my informants had an amusing tale to tell me, and I have included some in the transcriptions in Chapter 8. The miners' sense of humour is again evident in their choice of nicknames, many of which are included in Chapter 7, but although the older miners are often known to each other by these, the custom seems to be dying.

There are many Selstonians who have locally achieved legendary status. As C. Day Lewis wrote: "One may say that gossip, and its rich relation, Legend, flourish most heartily where there is a strong sense of community."[1] Community spirit is certainly present among colliers. Lawrence expressed it well in an essay in 1929. Lawrence's description also suggests the two different worlds inhabited by the collier: above ground and below ground. This accords with the comments on swearing of the miner quoted previously who referred to "two kinds of lives: underneath and on top".

"The pit did not mechanize men. On the contrary. Under the butty system, the miners worked underground as a sort of intimate community, they knew each other practically naked, and with curious close intimacy, and the darkness and the underground remoteness of the pit "stall", and the continual presence of danger, made the physical, instinctive and intuitional contact between men very highly developed,

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1. C. Day Lewis, Robert Frost, A Selection, Harmondsworth, 1951, p. 13.

a contact almost as close as touch, very real and very powerful. This physical awareness and intimate "togetherness" was at its strongest down pit. When the men came up into the light, they blinked. They had, in a measure, to change their flow. Nevertheless, they brought with them above ground the curious dark intimacy of the mine, the naked sort of contact, and if I think of my childhood, it is always as if there was a lustrous sort of inner darkness, like the gloss of coal, in which we moved and had our real being. My father loved the pit. He was hurt badly more than once, but he would never stay away. He loved the intense male comradeship of the dark days. They did not know what they had lost till they lost it."[1]

The "butty" system, in which a stall man, or contractor in charge of a stall, paid the men working under him, has gone, but much of the comradeship remains, and the older miners enjoy talking about the old days of the butty's stall. The collier quoted at length previously, had plenty to say concerning comradeship:

[ən ðɪz ə'nɔðə θɪŋ ɑ ʃəd lɒɪk tə hạd ||
And there's another thing I should like to add.

ɪntʔ pɪt | ạ | mɒɪnd ðɪ | ða fɔ:z a:t wɪ ðɪ
In the pit ..... mind you, you falls out with your

meɪt || ða 'kəsəz ɪm | ɛɪ kɔs ðɪ bạk gɛn ||
mate. You curses him; he curses you back again.

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1. From "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside" in E.D. McDonald (ed), Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence, London, 1936, reprinted 1961, p. 133.

bʌt ɪnʔ pɪʔ | ðɪz ðə bɛst 'kɔmreɪdʃɪp əz
But in the pit there's the best comradeship as

'ɪvər ɑ:v nɔun ɪn mɪ lɒɪf | 'gɪmɪʔ mɒɪnz fə
ever I've known in my life. Give me the mines for

'kɔmreɪdʃɪp | bɪ'kɔs ɑ 'dɔnə kɛə ë mɔtʃ ðad fël
comradeship, because I don't care how much you'd fell

æʔ wɪ ðɪ meɪt | ɪf ða sɛɪd ɪm ɪn 'deɪndʒə | ða
out with your mate, if you saw him in danger, you

wɨ ðɪə || ɪf ɨ sɛɪd ðɛɪ ɪn 'deɪndʒə | ɕɪ wɨ
were there. If he saw you in danger, he was

ðɪə | ðɪ wɨ nou anɪ'mɔsɨtɪ | ðad sɛd wɔʔ ðad
there. There was no animosity. You'd said what you'd

'wantəd tə seɪ | aɪd sɛd wɔt ɕɪd 'wantəd tə sï: |
wanted to say. He'd said what he'd wanted to say.

ən joɷ wɨ palz ə'gɛn nɛks di: | ən ɑ stɪl seɪ tə
And you were pals again next day. And I still say to

ðɪs deɪ | ɑv 'nevə si:n 'bɛtə 'kɔmreɪdʃɪp | ðən
this day, I've never seen better comradeship than

ðɨr ɪz ɪnʔ pɪʔs |||]
there is in the pits

Another retired miner from Eastwood, during the course of a conversation, spoke similarly of comradeship:

[ðə 'kɔmreɪdʃɪp ðəʔs ɪn ðə pɪʔs | ɪts 'ɒnɪ'madʒɪnəbl̩ |||]
The comradeship that's in the pits, it's unimaginable.

He, too, referred to the collier's two worlds: "It's another world, it's another world. You don't think about here when you're down below".

The community spirit in the Selston area, which mining has fostered, has contributed greatly to the conservation of the dialect by restricting outside influence. For many years, as might be expected, the numbers of the broader speakers of the Selston dialect have been dwindling. Some of the reasons have been mentioned, for instance, easier communication with other areas, and the influence of radio and television. Extension of the child's education with the influence of teachers over a longer period of school life has meant that each generation of children has shed more of the distinctive features of the Selston dialect, with a cumulative effect over two or three generations. Extensively educated Selston people may still be familiar with the dialect but education has increased their range of spoken registers. The boy no longer spends the impressionable period of his adolescence in the pit anxious to prove himself the peer of his older workmates and to share their intimacy. It is not surprising that the dialect which was fostered by a close-knit community should become a mark of comradeship. It seems that the Selston dialect manifests itself particularly in more friendly and lighthearted moments of communication, even among speakers who do not normally speak the dialect of their parents. It is not

unusual for people who have left the parish long ago to revert to dialect when speaking affectionately to their children or grandchildren. Maybe, in such bilingual speakers, this is a recollection of childhood. It is a truism in psychology that our earliest childhood relationships have an important bearing on our relationships in maturity. During moments of familiarity, speakers may subconsciously recollect the affection expressed by their own parents and if their parents happened to be broader speakers of dialect than themselves, as is usual, friendly and affectionate utterances are more likely to be in dialect. However, there are other reasons for the dialect being associated with familiarity. Dialect, being the esoteric language of a community is the language of friendship, and, in using it, a speaker is admitting the person he addresses to the intimacy of his group.

When dialect is understood as a mark of comradeship, it is easy to understand how it flourished down the pit, and how it influenced the youngsters who were there initiated into manhood. This influence has been curbed not only by lengthened schooling, but also by changes in the nature of mining. The intimacy of the butty's stall is a thing of the past and labour is more divided today. Boys who begin work at the pit nowadays do so usually by choice, since there is a wider range of employment open to them than formerly. I asked one octogenarian what sort of employment was available for boys leaving school

in his young days and this was the reply:

[wël | ə lad əz lɛf skɪul | ɛɪ ad tə mɛɪ ɪz
Well, a lad who left school, he had to make his

mɒɪnd ɷp | tə gɷ tə? pɪʧ? | ðɪ wə nɛut ël̈s ||
mind up to go to the pit. There was nothing else.

ɑ: wə twël̈v | ɑ: lɛft ɔn mɪ twël̈f 'bɔθdi: | ɑ:
I was twelve I left on my twelfth birthday. I

wɛnt? tə? pɪʧ? nɛks di: | ən | ən ðɪ wə nou
went to the pit next day and ... and there was no

'nɛɪtskɪul | ...]
nightschool ...

A reaction against the hardship of pit work has been observable among many families. Mr. Howard Peach, a local miner, expressed this in a poem "No More Pit Wock"[1] which begins:

"Tha knows 'ow some chaps talked at one time?
They made ert as they'd throw a fit
If iver a lad as they'd browt up
Were iver to wock dern a pit.

Ah wish as Ah'd got hafe a sovereign
For ivery time Ah've heard me Dad
Say, "Tha can be what tha likes but a collier,
Tha't none hayin' pit wock, owd lad!"

It was Lawrence's opinion that the reaction originally came from the women, whom he regarded as social climbers, intent on bettering themselves. In Sons and Lovers Mrs. Morel gets her son William a job in the "Co-op":

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1. Published in Notts Free Press, 26/4/68.

> '"What dost want ter ma'e a stool-harsed Jack on 'im for?" said Morel. "All he'll do is to wear his britches behind out, an 'earn nowt. What's 'e startin' wi?"
>
> "It doesn't matter what he's starting with," said Mrs. Morel ... He is not going in the pit ... and there's an end of it."'[1]

As a result of this reaction to pit work, coinciding with an age of increasing opportunity in employment, a much smaller proportion of local boys become colliers than before, and the pit, once the hub of the community and dialect, has lost much of its influence. The modification of the dialect has in this way been accelerated.

The greatest change in the identity of the area, and consequently of the dialect, is yet to come. The likelihood that industrial reorganization would affect the area was an incentive for me to make a systematic survey of the living dialect. The following copies of newspaper articles might help to illustrate the situation which was arising in 1968 when much of the early fieldwork for this survey was begun. The copy headed "Getting Erewash Valley out of the 'grey'", from the "Nottingham Evening Post and News", Tuesday, April 16, 1968, refers to announcements of pit closures in the Erewash Valley (including the Selston Area), and to possible future plans for supplanting the traditional mining industry with other

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1. D.H. Lawrence, Sons and Lovers, pp. 68-69.

Getting Erewash Valley out of the 'grey'

FEARS about the economic consequences of pit closures in the industrially swinging East Midlands can generally be allayed by quoting the absorptive capacity of the area as a whole.

But there is a nagging question mark about one part of this area, a question which is constantly exercising the minds of those more closely concerned with its future prosperity — the East Midlands Economic Planning Council.

This relates to the area from Clay Cross to Heanor and Alfreton, including Ripley and Langley Mill, which for convenience comes under the omnibus title of the Erewash Valley.

Why should this be more of a problem child than others? Mainly because of its geographical situation and its lack of diversified industry to which its population can look as a substitute for the traditional but dwindling coal mining.

It can be regarded as a "grey" enclave within a prosperous region. What the economic planners and the local councils are concerned about is that it should not get any greyer and that its situation should not be masked by the overall regional prosperity.

Commuters?

The danger may not be immediate. The effect of the inevitable pit closures might be some disruption for older people but the younger ones might become commuters to Nottingham and Derby.

But in the long term would this be the best sort of future for a community which has its own well-defined characteristics and an entity of its own? Members of the East Midlands Economic Planning Council do not think it would.

It may be reasonable to expect miners deprived of jobs in, say, the Mansfield area to start commuting to the Ollerton pits but loss of the Erewash Valley pits would leave the mining force there high and dry.

So what can be done to halt a drift into a situation which would hit the Erewash Valley economically and eventually change its character?

The obvious answer is attract more industry. But this is not so easily achieved at the moment, because paradoxically the area is part of a prosperous whole and so it does not qualify for the benefits which the Government hands out to the less prosperous or so-called "development" areas.

Where hope lies

The ray of hope lies in the Hunt Committee (headed by Sir Joseph Hunt) which was established six months ago to examine "in relation to the economic welfare of the country as a whole and the needs of the development areas the situation in other areas where the rate of the economic growth gives cause (or may give cause) for concern."

Obviously, this committee's report will carry great weight with the Government when it is made, and so the East Midlands planners have lost no time in making their representations about the case for the Erewash Valley.

The Planning Council sent written evidence to the Hunt Committee last year, and recently it reinforced this with oral evidence. This was given by Mr. Wilfrid Miron, Ald. J. Anderson (Derbyshire) and Mr. J. W. Farnsworth, chairman of the East Midlands Economic Planning Board.

Mr. Miron, who is chairman of the council's Trade and Industry Committee, is of course the Coal Board's regional chairman, so he is in close touch with all sides of the picture.

Permits needed

One of the curbs on development in an area such as the Erewash Valley is the difficulty of getting development certificates from the Board of Trade. In the East Midlands, a firm wanting to expand must get a certificate for anything over 3,000 square feet, and higher investment grants are not normally available.

"We would not expect the Erewash Valley to be given all the advantages of a development area," Mr. Miron says, "but we are anxious for some easing of the restrictions which militate against its development. We want inducements to be made available."

With an easing of factory building regulations, the Erewash Valley could expect to receive overspill industry from Nottingham, Derby and possibly Mansfield and Chesterfield — notably machine tools and electronics. The labour force available is considered adaptable and versatile.

What would be the alternative to the Erewash Valley getting an industrial blood transfusion? Its workers probably would have to rely more on commuting to Nottingham, Derby, Chesterfield and Mansfield. And that might be detrimental to the general prosperity, with loss of rateable values to councils.

No more pit wock

by HOWARD PEACH

Tha knows 'ow some chaps talked at one time?
They made ert as they'd throw a fit
If ever a lad as they'd browt up
Were iver to wock dern a pit.

Ah wish as Ah'd got hafe a sovereign
For ivery time Ah've heard me Dad
Say, "Tha can be what tha likes but a collier,
Tha't none hayin' pit wock, owd lad!"

Course, when Ah were a lad things were different.
To be a collier were t' mark of a man;
An' all them as wanna were shirkers,
But all them as wore were in t' clan.

At ten past five of a mornin'
Tha could hear fost shift clumpin' dern t' strayt,
Wearin' pit cloes an' carryin' a snap tin,
An' kickin' loose stones wi' their fayt.

About thray they went home t' their pit dot.
Pubs were shut, so there woren't much of a rush;
While t' mester lit up in t' 'ot watter bath,
His wife scrubs 'is back wi' a brush.

When pit baths come in, that were progress,
An' canteens sprung up thick an' fast.
An' as money got better an' better,
Lots o' folks exed, "'Ow long can it last?"

While t' young uns run up big HP debts,
An' hayin' got much, wanted more,
The owd 'ands kep theirn t' their pocket,
An' muttered, "Ah've seen this afore.

"We've swapped gaffers one for another;
Nationalisation's been all very well,
But tha watch when they find other fuels,
Trained miners can all go to —."

Doest remember them owd-fashioned posters?
'Mek thy career t' coal minin'.' they said.
If Ah could find t' designer, Ah'd unload 'em
Dern that hole at the front o' 'is yed!

These theory men haven't hafe blundered.
I can't understand 'em a bit.
There's mines shuttin' left, rayt an' centre —
There'll be more men on t' dole than dern t' pit.

In our road there isna one miner!
The shaft wheels don't turn. There's no noise.
But whoever's t' power. Ah can tell thee —
There'll allis be jobs for the boys!

industries. Such an "industrial blood transfusion" and the necessity of more workers commuting with areas outside their own community, are likely to contribute to the already increasing break-up of local dialect in this region. The copy entitled "No more pit wock", a comment on the situation by a Selston miner, is from another local newspaper.[1]

The above comments on social background can do no more than outline some of the more notable characteristics of Selston people and their social context. Further evidence of these characteristics is to be found in the transcriptions (Chapter 8) in which local people speak for themselves about their way of life. Additional evidence of the continuance of local tradition appears in Chapter 7, "Traditional verbal usages and other Selston folklore".

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1. See note on p. 30.

Methodology

I have been acquainted with the Selston dialect for most of my life. I was born in Nottingham, nine miles away from the parish and at the age of three moved to Nuthall, seven miles away. My mother was born in Selston parish and some of my earliest memories are of visiting grandparents and uncles and aunts in Jacksdale. As I was not native to the locality, it became evident to me during these visits that their language, in particular that of my older relations, was sometimes different from what I was used to at home and contained strange and often amusing words. By the age of four or five I had come to derive more amusement from being told to stop "picktipying", and "pulling megrims" than from the antics themselves, and during the next fifteen years I gradually became more conscious of the peculiarities of the dialect. My serious studies of the dialect began with a survey which I undertook in 1967 as an undergraduate. The present thesis grew out of this initial survey which was intended in the first place as a special research project for my second year course in Linguistics as part of my degree in English at Sheffield University.

In July 1967 I began to collect material to use as the basis for this survey, beginning by visiting various parts of the parish, particularly the Bagthorpe area, listening to and recording local speech, especially in places where people gather together. This enabled me

to gain much information about the language used in informal conversation, before beginning tape recorded interviews with individual informants. From the outset, the most important aspect of the survey was felt to be the examination of the sound system of the dialect and much of the initial fieldwork was directed towards the collection of information for this. Consequently, Chapter 2 is based primarily on a detailed analysis of the tape recorded speech of seven informants, supplemented by information gleaned from the considerable amount of time spent in conversation with, and listening to, people from the area.

I was introduced to the informants by my uncle, who lives in Selston parish at Underwood, very close to Bagthorpe. Most of the early interviews took place in August and September 1967, two or three sessions of an hour or two being spent with each informant, usually in the informal atmosphere of their own homes or of my uncle's house. The informants' speech was recorded on tape using a small portable cassette machine which was unobtrusive during interviews, and phonetic transcriptions were made from selected portions of these tapes.

The seven miners interviewed at length were native to the parish and lived in the Bagthorpe area. Six of them were retired and of these the youngest was sixty-five and the eldest over eighty at the time of the first interview.[1]

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1. See biographical details in Appendix Three.

All were very willing to help, and owing to their ready acceptance of the tape recorder and evident pleasure in reminiscing, it was soon possible to conduct interviews on an extremely informal basis, a great help in promoting free and varied conversation.

The eldest informant, interviewed first, had prepared before our meeting a useful list of Bagthorpe expressions and later provided me with other lists. He was used to being recorded, having once been recorded by the BBC for a programme about Lawrence and the Erewash Valley. He recalled his former friendship with Jesse Chambers (Miriam of Sons and Lovers), whom he used to sit next to at school, and lent me a volume of impressive and interesting poems which he had composed on various subjects, including mining. The book was hand-written and obviously of great value to him, but his willingness to lend it to me was typical of his extremely helpful attitude, and indeed of the attitude of all of the people. All the informants spoke easily and at length, with little prompting, about themselves, the pit, and about past and present life in Selston.

To put them at their ease before using the tape recorder, it was explained that the recordings were purely for my own use, and that only transcriptions and written notes made from the recordings would be presented in the final survey. Before making each interview a few questions were prepared about mining topics and the changes which

have taken place in the mining world, about the kind of education formerly available in Selston, local customs, legends, and local names for various objects and creatures. I decided not to use a formal questionnaire, but relied on general conversation around these topics. The informants were very willing to talk, and, in order to ensure as much continuity as possible in the recordings, I said little, except to direct the subject matter of their speech where necessary. It was therefore possible to transcribe from these recordings without making omissions or rearranging the order of material.

The examination of the sound system of the dialect, mostly based on information gained from meetings with the informants in 1967, was largely completed in that year, although some minor additions and alterations have been made since. The transcriptions in Chapter 8 were made from the 1967 interviews. When the initial project had been completed, I decided to expand the research I had already done, to follow up certain ideas in more detail and to base the work on a broader spectrum of informants than before. I needed much information to fill many gaps, and arranged to have further interviews with some of the original informants and with several whom I had not interviewed before. Interviews were held between 1968 and 1970 for the purpose of collecting material for the glossaries, particularly mining terminology. Written and oral questionnaires were devised as a means of obtaining more specific information than emerges from the free

conversation interview, although much information was gained from free conversation with informants, especially on mining topics. Material for the General Glossary was collected in various ways. Many of the words were obtained directly from the informants, while others were taken from lists of Nottinghamshire and of Derbyshire dialect words, after each word had been verified as current Selston usage by one or more informants.

During early fieldwork it had become apparent that a large proportion of the inhabitants of the area conformed in their speech to wider regional standards than the broad and more traditional dialect spoken by the older generation of miners. It was decided that if the survey of the area's dialect was to be properly balanced, some representation should be given to these varieties of speech. It was also decided to investigate to what extent those who had left the area had retained its characteristic speech. Seven new informants, all native to the parish but several now living outside the area, and all with varying degrees of outside influence on their speech, were interviewed during 1970. All of them were well known to me as close acquaintances or relatives and interviews were again completely informal and uninhibited, ensuring that the information gained was based on their ordinary speech. Information about their pronunciation was obtained by oral questionnaire, in which questions were phrased to elicit their pronunciation of certain predetermined words. The same informants were given written questionnaires to

answer relating to their knowledge and use of certain items of vocabulary.

Although most of the interviewing took place in the period between 1967 and 1970, collection of material has been continuing up to the present. It is still occasionally helpful to revisit the informants when additional information is required to answer questions which arise or to fill in any gaps which remain. Sometimes a chat with one of the informants reveals a saying which I have not recorded before and which is subsequently included in the glossary.

The bulk of the information collected for this survey was from oral sources, but some useful material was gleaned from certain publications, although to my knowledge, no analysis of the dialect of any part of the Erewash valley has been published. Two publications which proved to be useful background reading were Selston Church of England (Controlled) School 1861-1961 Centenary Booklet[1] and Victorian Selston.[2] Many of the historical facts in the introductory chapter of this survey were taken from these booklets. Other sources of information particularly useful in the early stages of compiling the General Glossary were lists of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire dialect words; the Nottinghamshire words, mainly from the records of the Thoroton Society, and the Derbyshire words from Samuel Pegge's Two Collections of Derbicisms.[3] By reading some

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1. See p. 3.
2. See p. 4.
3. S. Pegge, Two Collections of Derbicisms, ed. W.W. Skeat and T. Hallam, London, 1896.

of the words from these lists to certain informants it was possible to identify a number of dialectal terms which were used in the Selston area, both as forms identical to and variant from those in the published lists. However, only a small proportion of terms in the Glossary were discovered in this way.

When a considerable amount of fieldwork had been carried out, the primary data were assembled and the process of classification was begun. Initial priority was given to the sound system of the dialect since it was felt that Selston pronunciation was the most distinctive aspect of the dialect, and that preparation of this section would provide insights in preparing later chapters, in which reference to pronunciation or to extracts of phonetic transcription would be inevitable. During examination of the sound system, certain patterns in the phonology became apparent, which led to an investigation of the basic differences between the pronunciation of the dialect and RP. Following the description of the sound system it was decided to include a section in which Selston pronunciation could be evaluated against RP. The organisation of the vowels and diphthongs, which occupy most of this section, follows the sequential order of listed phonetic variants used by J.D.A. Widdowson in his study of an East Yorkshire dialect.[1] Classification of the

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1. J.D.A. Widdowson, "A Pronouncing Glossary of the Dialect of Filey in the East Riding of Yorkshire", unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Leeds, 1966, Vol. 1, p. 50.

lexis followed that of the sound system, and for ease of reference it seemed best, in view of the large number of mining terms, to split the lexical material into two sections: a general glossary of miscellaneous vocabulary and a mining glossary restricted to mining terminology. The large corpus of collected material from which the information on pronunciation and lexis was derived, offered much scope, when supplemented by further research, for a study of the structural elements of the dialect at both word and sentence level. Moreover, the vast amount of oral narrative to be found in the tape recordings led to an investigation of the oral style of these speakers. These elements were eventually classified separately as Grammar and Syntax and Oral Style respectively. Additionally, the same corpus of material contained a considerable amount of cultural tradition which led to the compilation of a chapter on traditional verbal usages and other folklore, which was classified according to the appropriate headings in the basic system of categories used by the Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language under the general headings of Language, Childlore, Custom and belief, and Folk narrative.

One of the earliest tasks to be completed was the phonetic transcription of extracts from tape recordings of the informants' speech. This provided much of the basic information for the description of the sound system and additional material for most of the other chapters. It seemed useful to include a chapter towards the end of

the present study consisting of representative selections from these transcriptions, so that the analytical chapters could be followed by a section in which the diverse elements of Selston speech analysed in the main discussion could be reconstituted into the original lively and lucid continuum which gives the Selston dialect its identity.

Chapter 1, the Introduction, contains some details of the geographical, industrial, historical, educational and social context in which the dialect has evolved. In this chapter are discussed the Selstonian's attitude to his own dialect, the conservatism of the dialect, in particular the lack of outside influence on the community until recently, the comradeship and community spirit in Selston, and the influence of the pit on the dialect.

Chapter 2 examines in detail the sound system of the dialect and the vowels, diphthongs and consonants of the dialect are compared to those of RP.

Chapter 3 deals with the lexis. The General Glossary is presented first, followed by the more specific Mining Glossary. The General Glossary contains words and expressions which are lexically unusual outside the Selston area, and, although not necessarily restricted to the Selston area, are not commonly found in standard varieties of English. Each item is accompanied by a phonetic transcription to indicate the dialectal pronunciation. The Mining Glossary comprises mining terms with which most Selston colliers would be familiar, some of which

are now obsolete and refer to outdated processes. Many of the words are found in other mining areas, sometimes in a slightly different form, and some are apparently restricted to the Selston area.

Chapter 4 is entitled "Aspects of Dialectal Variation. A comparative analysis of the dialect of speakers subject to external influences". The more widespread regional types of speech found in Selston are discussed to balance the emphasis placed in the first three chapters on the traditional and conservative dialect of the older generation of miners. This discussion indicates how closely the speech of those subject to outside influence conforms to the type of Selston dialect presented in Chapters 2 and 3. Also included here is an introduction, a brief illustration, with transcription, of the differences in speech between two generations, biographical details of informants, examples of lexical and pronunciation questionnaires, followed by charts of informants' responses, and finally conclusions drawn in detail from the evidence obtained.

Chapter 5, "Grammar and Syntax" deals mainly with constructions which are not widespread in English usage and is organized in seven main sections, 1) Verbal inflexions, 2) Auxiliaries, 3) Double negatives, 4) Pronouns, 5) Prepositional usage, 6) Adjectives and Adverbs, 7) Determiners. The emphasis in this chapter is on linguistic structure at word and sentence level. Following on naturally from this, Chapter 6, "Oral Style" investigates the importance

of linguistic structure at a different level - in the oral transmission of culture, and examines those aspects of Selston speech which belong to form and expression and to the manner in which ideas are expressed rather than to the substance of the thought or to such structural aspects of speech as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and syntax.

Chapter 7, "Traditional verbal usages and other Selston folklore" follows on from Chapter 6 by dealing with the oral transmission of cultural tradition from the point of view of content, rather than structure or style, and is arranged under the following headings: 1) Language, 2) Childlore, 3) Custom and Belief, 4) Narrative.

Following a brief introduction the final chapter contains transcriptions taken from the living dialect as spoken by seven informants. The first of these is a very narrow transcription, with as much idiolectal detail as possible recorded, and the others are fairly broad, illustrating the general characteristics of the dialect without recording minor idiolectal irregularities. An interlinear gloss has been provided and questions asked of the informants at the time of interview have been included at the points where they interrupted or helped to redirect the flow of speech.

In conclusion, after the Bibliography, there is a detailed map of the Selston area, a selection of

photographs of general interest, and biographical details of the chief informants of the Survey.